

## Message Text

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17

ACTION INR-05

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 RSC-01 /017 W

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R 291535Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1006

UNCLAS BEIRUT 12922

FOR BURT INR/MP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AINR

SUBJECT: MAPS: PLACE NAMES

REF: STATE 234430

1. COL. MUHAMMAD AYOUBI, DAG PLACE NAMES EXPERT, DESCRIBES NEW (SINCE 1972) TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM USED BY DAG AS COMPROMISE BETWEEN BGN/CGN SYSTEM AND FRENCH SYSTEM BUT MUCH NEAR BGN. SAYS DAG SYSTEM IS SIMPLIFIED, FLEXIBLE (DELIBERATELY NOT RIGIDLY SYSTEMATIC), AND DESIGNED TO FIT LOCAL NEEDS. FORMER SYSTEM (ALMOST ENTIRELY FRENCH) ABANDONED BECAUSE BGN TRANSLITERATION PRODUCED MORE NEARLY CORRECT PRONUNCIATION.

2. DEPARTURES FROM BGN INCLUDE OMISSION OF INVERTED COMMA FOR AYN (I.E., AYN IS IGNORED), OMISSION OF ANY DIACRITICAL MARKS (I.E., ALEPH AND KASRA SHOWN BY SAME LETTER, A; AND SIN AND DAH USE SAME S AND D AS SOD AND DOD), USE OF OU IN TRANSLITERATION OF STRESSED WAW AS VOWEL, OCCASIONAL USE OF E IN TRANSLITERATION, ETC.

3. THUS, CANNOT SAY DAG HAS ADOPTED BGN/PCGN SYSTEM BUT CAN SAY IT HAS ADOPTED CONSIDERABLY MODIFIED BGN/PCGN SYSTEM.

4. COL. AYOUBI PREPARING NEW GAZETTEER LISTING LEBANON  
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PLACE NAMES IN ARABIC, FRENCH SYSTEM TRANSLITERATION,

AND NEW DAG SYSTEM, TO REPLACE GAZETTEER OF 1969-70. ESTIMATES COMPLETION TIME AS ANOTHER YEAR. WILL HAVE PART OF LIST WITH HIM AT UN GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES CONFERENCE, NEW YORK, NEXT MARCH. SAYS ARAB STATES DECIDED UNIFORM SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC NAMES NOT FEASIBLE (MAGHRAB STATES INSIST ON RETAINING FRENCH SYSTEM), BUT SHIFT TOWARD BGN SYSTEM DEFINITELY MADE BY LEBANON AND NEIGHBORING STATES.

5. RGO DEPARTING FOR CAIRO OCTOBER 29, WILL CONFER FURTHER WITH DAG AFTER RETURN TO BEIRUT O/A NOVEMBER 6. GODLEY

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## Message Attributes

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